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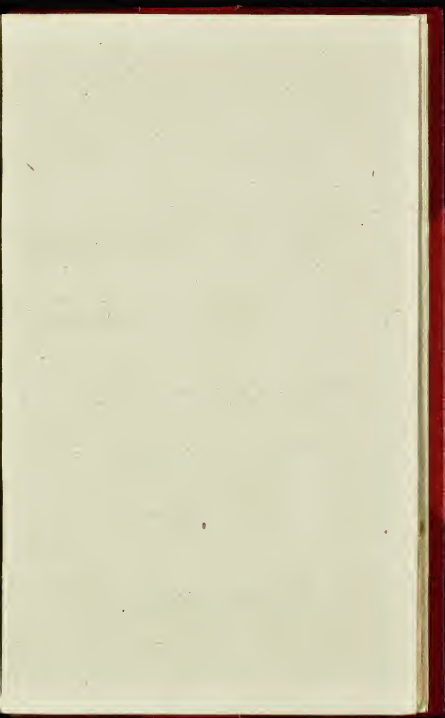
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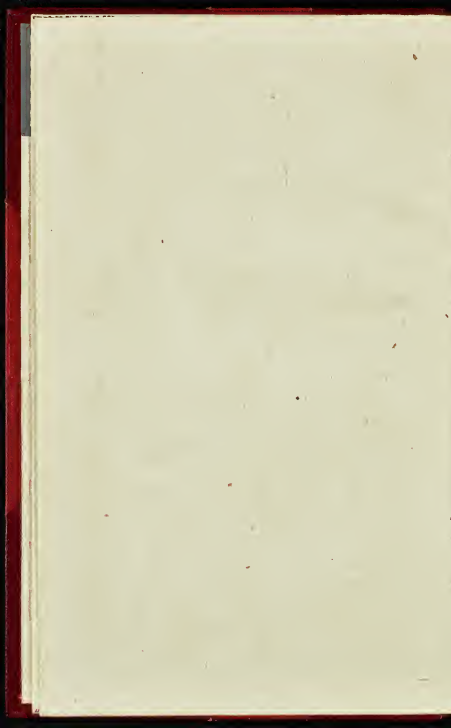
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THRILLING NARRATIVE

OF THE

ADVENTURES, SUFFERINGS AND STARVATION

OF

Pike's Peak Gold Seekers

ON

THE PLAINS OF THE WEST,

IN THE

WINTER AND SPRING OF 1859.

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BY ONE OF THE SURVIVORS.

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WHITESIDE COUNTY, ILL., 1860

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CHICAGO, ILL.:  
EVENING JOURNAL STEAM PRINT, 50 DEARBORN STREET.

1860

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ENTERED according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by DANIEL BLUE, in the  
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THE NEWBERRY  
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GDAR

## INTRODUCTORY.

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The narrator of this tale of adventures and sufferings is a stranger to the Public; and in these times of imposition, when so much passes for truth that is merely fiction, the public are incredulous towards all stories they read or hear, especially when coming from one, of whose character they know nothing. In order, therefore, that my readers may not be left without some reason, more than my own assertion, for believing my narrative, I subjoin the following certificates from gentlemen of position and credibility, residing in the county of my home.

DANIEL BLUE.

STATE OF ILLINOIS, }  
WHITESIDE COUNTY, } ss Be it known that the undersigned is personally acquainted with Daniel Blue, of Whiteside County, Illinois, and has full confidence in the statement of his sufferings, and of the horrible death of his two brothers, Charles and Alexander, while on their road to Pike's Peak in the spring of 1859, as related by said Daniel Blue. I have had the acquaintance of Mr. Blue for a number of years, and know him to be a reliable man for truth and veracity.

Given under my hand and seal this 22d day of December, A.D. 1859, at Ustick, Whiteside County, Illinois.

MESIL MEAD,  
*Justice of the Peace.*

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In times when veracity is sacrificed to interest, and the people are compelled to receive truth as well as error with caution, if not with distrust, it is the duty of all honest men to testify to the truth whenever the opportunity occurs. For this reason, I hereby

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certify that, though I had no *personal* knowledge of all the facts related in his melancholy narrative, yet from my intimate acquaintance with Daniel Blue, his parents and surroundings, for nearly twenty years, I have every reason to believe that his is an "ower true tale."

D. MACKAY.

OAKVILLE, December 10, 1859.

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MORRISON, WHITESIDE Co., ILL., Oct. 2, 1860.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.—This is to certify that I am acquainted with the bearer, Mr. Daniel Blue, and cheerfully recommend him to your confidence.

J. W. WHITE,  
*Pastor Cong. Church, Morrison.*

## THE NARRATIVE.

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It is a sad story I have to tell—a story of painful facts, of thrilling adventure, of terrible sufferings endured, of heart-rending scenes witnessed, and of a marvelous rescue from death. My pen trembles in my hand as I undertake the reluctant task. My heart swells almost to bursting, and the unbidden tears come streaming to my eyes, while I recall to my mind the harrowing details which, at the urgent solicitation of friends, I am about to embody in a published narrative. I confess that I would rather not do it—rather not “live over again,” even in thought, as I have to now, the scenes, experiences and horrors which I witnessed and felt during the few short weeks which cover the events of this narrative.

Gold has a magnetic power upon the human mind. The hope of its possession has infatuated thousands, and the pursuit of it has plunged tens of thousands into misery and premature graves. For its sake, men imperil their lives, sacrifice their peace of mind, their comfort of body, and sometimes their very souls. They forsake homes, loved ones, friends, and everything that is dear to their hearts, and cross seas, deserts and mountains, enduring the greatest hardships and the severest deprivations, in quest of the expected wealth that gold will give. In a country where gold-seeking is so common—so almost universal—no one will either be surprised or blame me when I state that the object of undertaking the adventures which I am about to relate, and which resulted so disastrously to myself and my companions, was the getting of gold.

All remember the general excitement that was occasioned throughout this western country during 1858 and 1859 by the glowing reports of the discovery of rich and abundant gold mines in Western Kansas and Nebraska Territories, in the region known as “Pike’s Peak,” among the Rocky Mountains. Influenced by

these reports, as many other young men were at that time, a company of five, consisting of three brothers, Alexander Blue, the oldest, myself (Daniel) next of age, and Charles Blue, the youngest, and John Campbell (our cousin) and Thomas Stevenson, all residing in Whiteside County, Illinois, determined to start for that far-distant land of gold. My oldest brother, Alexander, had a family—a wife and four young children—but the rest of us were unmarried. So bidding farewell to father, mother, three sisters, a comfortable home and many fond friends, we started forth from Whiteside County on the morning of the 22d of February, 1859, bound for "Pike's Peak." We traveled by railroad to St. Louis, and thence by boat on the Missouri river to Kansas City. There we left the river, and journeyed on foot to Lawrence, where we purchased a pony, and packing our blankets and satchels upon his back, proceeded to Topeka, where we purchased two hundred pounds of flour, which we also packed upon the back of our pony, and on foot, and leading our pony, we journeyed on till we got some three miles west of Manhattan, where we took shelter from a severe snow-storm in the hut of an old Indian named James Levea. Here we met a company of nine other young men, also bound for the gold mines. One of those was a man named John Gibbs, whom we called "Captain" Gibbs, because, he having, as he said, been over these western plains once before, we relied upon him as a sort of leader. The storm lasted three days, and then joining Gibbs' party of nine, we proceeded on our journey, but had not proceeded far when we overtook two others, John Currans and Geo. Soley, of Cleveland, Ohio, also bound for Pike's Peak. There were now sixteen of us—a good sociable party—all feeling well and prepared for almost any emergency. We three brothers and our two original companions were a little better off than the rest in having a pony to carry our luggage and provisions, the others carrying theirs in packs on their backs. We had about a hundred miles to travel before reaching Fort Riley, and arrived there in a little less than three days from the Indian's hut.

At Fort Riley we tarried about half a day, debating as to which route we should take for Denver City, the "Republican," or the "Smoky Hill" route, the former being more northerly than the latter, and called about 600 miles, while the latter was only 500. Capt. Gibbs said he had crossed the plains by the "Smoky Hill" route, and professed to be well acquainted with it; consequently,

the majority of the party decided to take that route, though I urged strongly that we should take the "Republican." Somehow, I had a presentiment, at that time, that we should meet with calamity if we took the Smoky Hill route. Therefore, without knowing anything as to the advantages of the respective routes, I did all I could to persuade the party to take the other, but I had to yield to the decision of the majority, and we started off, following the Kansas river—wading across the Republican Fork of that stream—and before the close of that day, a driving snow-storm overtook us—one of the most terrible storms I ever witnessed—and we left our pony and provisions, and, wrapping ourselves in our blankets, hurried to a house a short distance from us, where we dried ourselves at a stove and remained till next morning. Here myself and my brother Charles tried again to persuade the party to return and take the other route, but Gibbs and his companions prevailed upon us to abandon that idea, and so we started off westward once again. I had purchased a tent at the Fort for protection at night, but my companions prevailed upon me to leave it behind, so that all we had to shelter ourselves with on this long journey of over 500 miles of uninhabited country were woollen blankets, into which we wrapped ourselves at night, lying down to sleep on the bare ground. The first two days out from the Fort we made some thirty-five miles, and, after a good night's rest, started off, now abandoning all roads, and trusting only to the sun's course, and to the course of the Kansas river, which we continued to follow. We journeyed on, good weather and bad, for some six or eight days, when the nine men of Gibbs' party, Gibbs himself included, made a halt for the purpose of hunting buffaloes while they yet were in the buffalo country, their provisions being nearly exhausted. Our original party of five, together with Geo. Soley, went on; but we had not proceeded over two days when we found ourselves completely confused as to our course, having lost sight of the river. We struck towards what we supposed to be in the direction of the river, and traveled till night, when we made a stop to rest till morning, unpacking our pony and leaving him grazing near by. In the morning we woke up, and our pony was gone. We spent half a day in looking for him, but did not find him, and so gave him up as hopelessly lost, supposing that the Indians had stolen him. We were now about half way between Fort Riley and Denver City. Dividing off our provisions and

satchels, (which the pony had till now borne for us,) into equal portions in packs, we slung them upon our backs and went on, two of the other party, John Scott and a Hungarian, and another man named Haws, of Indiana, whom they found on their way, he having been lost from another company, having in the meantime rejoined us. There were now nine in our party.

We journeyed on for a number of days, and were, it was supposed, about two days' travel from the head of the Smoky Hill route, when my brother, Alexander Blue, was taken with severe pains in the head and back, and we had to stop to give him a chance to recruit. We rested four or five hours, when, after getting a drink of water, Alexander felt able to proceed. Here we consumed the last bit of flour and provisions that we had with us, and threw away all the luggage we could possibly dispense with, and went on. We had already been through considerable rough weather—storms of wind and snow—and had suffered from cold. It was the 17th day of March, I believe, when we reached the head of the Smoky Hill Fork. We then sat down in the peaceful, solemn wilderness, like pilgrims, lonely and solitary in a strange country, and talked over our past adventures and our future prospects. We had nothing to eat, having consumed everything we had. The question for us to decide, then, was whether to stop and hunt for game before proceeding farther, or to go on and "trust to luck." We had been informed, both before starting and while on the way, that the distance from this point to Denver City was only about fifty-five miles. This was our great mistake, the actual distance being about 170 miles. With only about fifty-five miles before us, we supposed, of course, that, with the chance small game we could kill on our way, we could make out to subsist to our journey's end, and so we determined to go on without stopping to hunt for game. Oh! it was a fatal, a terrible mistake, this mis-information as to the real distance.

We now had to trust entirely to the sun's course as to *our* course, having no compass nor guide of any kind with us, and having now reached the head of the Smoky Hill Fork, which we had followed. We struck out over the wide prairies what the sun indicated to be westward, and were once again fairly on our journey. But on the afternoon of that day a tremendous snow-storm suddenly came upon us, fierce and cold, the wind blowing copious snow furiously. We faced the storm boldly, and kept on our

journey. The sun was hid, and we knew not where we were, in what direction we were going, or what was before us. Confused, lost, drenched and blinded, in the general chaos of falling and driving snow—lying down, wrapped in our blankets to rest in the nights, and again struggling onward in our uncertain way during day-light—we continued to fight this terrible storm for five long days and nights. Alexander and Charles both were sick, weary and discouraged. In addition to his sufferings from the general fatigue of traveling and the want of food, Alexander endured the agonies of inflammatory rheumatism. He suffered intensely, but stood it heroically, seldom uttering complaint, lest he would make Charles feel worse. He restrained his own feelings on this account; and, indeed, in our general distress, discouragements and hunger, during the great storm, we all said and did everything we could to encourage and keep up each other. About the time the storm ended, we had to stop for Charles' sake. He became completely disabled, and, after doing all we could for his relief, we spread our blankets on the snow, and wrapping ourselves up in them, went to sleep as we had the previous nights, trusting that the morrow would bring food, strength and hope. We found, when the sun appeared again, that we had got off our course, and had, indeed, been traveling almost in a circle; but now we saw our westward course once more, and in the morning, Charles being better, we prepared to resume our journey. Before doing so, however, Alexander and I, seeing a drove of wild horses near by, made chase and tried to shoot one (for there were two or three guns in our party) in order to secure food. Alexander ran very hard, and a considerable distance, to get a shot at them, but neither of us succeeded, and Alexander rejoined the company in a much worse condition than he had been at any time before. He had exerted himself too much, and the reaction and general effect of the effort almost prostrated him completely. We had to tarry a little longer on that spot in consequence. Haws (the Indiana man) and the Hungarian here forsook us, going on alone, and leaving the rest of us (eight in all) to our fate. Getting rested somewhat, (and that wasn't much, for all we could find to eat was snow and an occasional rabbit that we captured, and a dog that had followed us,) we proceeded slowly on our way once more, and after traveling three days farther, during which none of us were hardly able to drag one foot after another, being so weak and

weary; and while going down the side of a ravine, Alexander sank down exhausted and in extreme pain. We wrapped him up in blankets, bathed him with snow water, and tearing our shirts into strips, bandaged his feet and head, and did all we could in our weak and almost dying condition to relieve him, and then we all laid down in our blankets on the snow and rested till morning.

Oh, for something nourishing to eat! How hunger gnawed in our stomachs, parched our lips, and dried up the moisture of our throats and mouths! How it weakened us, consuming, as if by fire, our muscles and our juices! It reduced us to very skeletons, and we stalked about, emaciated, with death's hollow sound in every word we tried to speak, with death's dull, leaden fixedness in our eyes, and with death's pale look in our sad and wretched faces. A sad, desperate plight was ours. I had read and heard of human sufferings on the battle field, on the sick bed, on the land and on the sea, but never had my imagination conceived sufferings like those which I and my poor companions endured during those horrible winter days on these far-western plains. It makes me shudder, even now, to think of them, and I only wonder how any of us lived as long, in the midst of those hardships, as we did, or that I now live to relate them.

It was here, in the midst of these tribulations, while we were lying on the ground together, and feeling that death from starvation was near at hand to all of us, that our conversation turned to the subject of *eating each other!* Horrible thought! One of the company mentioned the fact that sailors have been known to do so at sea, and that travelers on the deserts have done the same.

"Here let us rest now," remarked John Campbell, our cousin; "if we have to die, let us die decently; or let us cast lots to see which of us shall die to feed the rest."

"I am willing to die to feed any of you," said my brother Charles, too weak almost to utter the words. "I don't feel like going any further."

The thought of taking the life of any of my companions, in order to preserve my own, was abhorrent to me, and I remarked to Campbell: "John, I am sorry that one as old as you are should speak in that manner, considering our present condition. For my part, I am willing to die by starving to-death, if it must be so; but am not willing that any of you should die to keep me alive."

And yet, the subject having been mentioned, we kept thinking of



it, and subsequently we again spoke of it, and all then agreed that whichever of us should die first, should be eaten by the rest. We then slept till morning.

It was on one of these days of our sufferings, when, seeing a drove of Antelopes near us, I attempted to shoot one, but was prevented by a serious accident. Crouching near the ground, I awaited their approach, with my gun cocked; but on trying to change my position, I let the butt of the gun fall heavily to the ground, which caused it to discharge, and the shot pierced a corner of a satchel under Thomas Stevenson's arm, he being seated on the ground about ten feet from me, on the left. It was a narrow escape for Stevenson. I thanked God, and I trust he does, that he was not instantly killed.

Well, on the next morning, after the conversation above reported, with the sun rising brightly, and with prospects for a fair day, we awoke, and I rose before the rest, and walking out a short distance to the top of a ridge, and looking westward, I beheld for the first time, dimly up among the clouds, a peak of the Rocky mountains. My heart, faint with weakness, beat quicker then, and a thrill of joy came over me, and hope revived. I ran back to my companions, and joyfully announced to them my discovery.

"The peak! the peak! I see it afar off there in the westward! Take courage, boys, and let us go on."

These words seemed to revive them a little, and we were soon again on the march—slowly and solemnly, like a funeral march, it is true; but not without hope. I carried Alexander a portion of the way, Charles and Soley, though very weak, being still able to walk. Stevenson, Scott, and Campbell bore up wonderfully. But we had not gone over forty rods, when Alexander fell down exhausted again.

"Daniel," said he, "my race is run: I have gone as far as I can." And we stopped, and bandaged and washed him again. I now deemed it improper for my brothers to try to go on further, and it was then proposed that all of the party who were able, should go on, and if they found help, should return to the rescue of the others. John Campbell, Thomas Stevenson and John Scott, then determined to leave us, and requested George Soley, the Cleveland boy, to do likewise, but the noble boy replied, "No, I will stick to these boys till I die." They had hardly been out of our sight, when Soley, who, without a murmur, had thus far suf-

fered everything and borne up with the strongest of us, sank down, completely overcome by his physical weakness. He and brother Alexander were now completely prostrate, helpless as babes. Charles rallied a little during the day, and he walked along slowly, while I carried the two helpless men along, first bearing Soley a certain distance, and setting him down; then going back after Alexander; and then again returning for our satchels. My object was to find, if possible, a better shelter for them, hoping to find a human habitation of some kind. But evening came again, and our condition and prospects were more desperate and wretched than ever before.

We had now been eight entire days without food, except boiled roots and grass and the snow, and even these, what little we could get of them, did not in the least satisfy our hunger. The roots were bitter and would not digest, and laid heavily on our stomachs, making us more miserable than we had felt previously.

On that night Alexander suffered terribly, and I had to sit up with him, trying to soothe and alleviate his excruciating rheumatic pains. Charles and Soley slept soundly till morning; but at about seven o'clock that same morning, Soley commenced to sink rapidly, and soon expired, bidding us a sad farewell, and requesting us, with his last words, to take his body and eat of it as much as we could, and thus preserve our lives. The poor, noble-hearted boy had actually *starved to death!* And in his fate, we three brothers, who were now left entirely alone, saw our own; for death was surely gnawing at our vitals, and we felt that soon we would have to follow our now silent, pale and emancipated companion to the other world, "where the weary are at rest." We were not strong enough to inter the corpse, neither had we pick or shovel with which to dig a grave, even if we could muster strength enough to do so. The dead body laid there for three days, we lying helpless on the ground near it, our craving for food increasing continually, until, driven to desperation, wild with hunger, and feeling, in its full force, the truth of the sentiment, that "self-preservation is the first law of nature," we took our knives and commenced cutting the flesh from the legs and arms of our dead companion, and ate it! This was the hardest of our trials—this being forced to eat human flesh. We restrained as long as we could, but we yielded at last, for it was our last resort for hope of preservation. After having, with eager relish, devoured

part of a leg and part of an arm, the corpse began to mortify and to smell, and we could eat no more of it. But what we had eaten, though it at first sickened us, had the effect to strengthen us a little, and enabled us to bear up longer than we could have done otherwise. We tarried there several days, to give Alexander an opportunity to recover from his terrible pains, but, overcome by his intense pains and hunger, he, too, sank down and died. He retained his consciousness to the last moment, and a short time before his death, he succeeded in writing on a piece of paper, the following brief farewell to his family :

APRIL 18TH, 1859.

MY DEARLY BELOVED WIFE AND CHILDREN :

I take my pen in a trembling hand, to let you know that my hour of death is near, caused from want of bread. Oh, my God ! what a hard death ! My kind love to you and all my dear children. My love to father and mother, sisters and Richard. God bless you and keep you all, my dear wife and children.

ALEXANDER BLUE.

It was a solemn time for us, all alone there on that vast prairie—lost, helpless wanderers on a desert—to hear our dying brother's last words and requests. He said he was happy in finding relief from his long sufferings ; all he regretted, was that he could not see his wife, children, parents and sisters, before giving up this life ; and requested us, if we should chance to live to return home, to take good care of his family. He wished us to bid all farewell for him, and trusted fervently that he should meet us all in the "other world." With these words spoken, he sank into the sleep of death, as gently and peacefully as a child going to sleep. Before his death, he, like Soley, urged us to eat his body for our own preservation. After he had been dead two days, the uncontrollable and maddening cravings of hunger, impelled Charles and I to devour a part of our own brother's corpse ! It was a terrible thing to do, but we were not in a condition of mind or heart to do as we or other men would have done amid ordinary circumstances. We were considerably strengthened by the food, and taking a part of our brother's body with us, to eat thereafter, we resumed our journey. We traveled a number of days farther, necessarily slowly,

not proceeding over a mile or two each day, when, coming to a ravine near the banks of Beaver Creek, Charles sank down exhausted, and we made a stop. I tried hard to sooth, encourage and relieve the dear hoy—gathered some wild prickly pears and tree hark, which he ate, but nothing that he swallowed digested, and he became so constipated and hound up that he could neither eat anything more, nor free himself from that which he had eaten, and after thus suffering for a time, he, too, the last of my brothers, died from sickness, starvation and general exhaustion, and I was left alone in company with my dear brother's corpse—alone in a boundless waste of prairie, weak, helpless and starving, Charles also died happy—expressed his trust in Heaven—felt that God had forgiven all his sins, and he was “going home to glory.” “Oh, Daniel,” he said, “seek your soul's salvation, and tell my sister to remember her God, and to remember me, and prepare to meet me in heaven. You will live to get home—oh, remember your Saviour, who died for your sake”—and he expired. Some days before his death, he made out to write on a piece of paper the following:

APRIL 18TH, 1859.

MY DEAR FATHER:

I take my pen in hand, to let you know that my hour of death is near at hand. God help you and mother. We all three brothers are here together, near the Big Sandy River. We have twenty-five dollars and five cents.

Anyone that finds this letter, will please write to Daniel Blue, of Clyde, Whiteside County, Illinois.

P. S.—My dear father and mother, what a terrible sensation to know that in a very few hours I must die, and you far from me, and all for the want of a little food. Oh, dear father and mother, could you imagine the distressed feelings that burn within me—to know that within a few hours I must die, and that in good health—all for the want of a piece of bread. May God help us all, and that we all may meet in heaven. Take care of head! Pray take care of bread! My affectionate love to you all.

CHARLES BLUE.

I laid me down in sorrow by the side of my dead brother's body, weeping and moaning over his death. I was now sick of life, and

gave over in despair. While my brothers were still living, the hope of saving them and yet bringing them to a place of shelter and relief, bore me up, and inspired me with courage, strength and resolution; but they were now dead, and I was now alone, having no one but myself to care for. My spirit shrank in despair within me, and I made up my mind to die. For three days I laid there, impelled by the terrible pains of hunger to rise up only three or four times during that time, and then, alas! to eat of my brother's body, that was lying dead and pale by my side, and refresh myself with the water of the Creek near by. But this did not nourish me, the food that was already in my stomach seeming to have hardened into stone. Gradually becoming weaker, I at last found myself unable to rise from the ground at all; and then my vision forsook me; I could not see my own hand before my eyes; was completely blind—and then, still retaining my senses, I felt I was indeed dying. Finally I fell asleep, remaining unconscious, I do not know how long—it may have been for days, or only hours. The first I knew, was the hearing of a voice exclaiming gruffly—"Weak! Weak!" and a human hand was laid upon me. I had not strength enough to speak or make a motion; and the Indian—for such he was, and there were three of them—of the Arapahoe tribe—took me carefully in his arms, laid me on his poney's back, and thus conveyed me to his tent, their Chief and a number of his tribe being camped there. He and his squaw bathed me, and gave me some tenderly cooked Antelope meat and some drink; the effect of these was to throw me into a violent fever, and to make me feel very sick. He then gave me some warm Antelope blood and some raw Antelope liver; these tasted sweet, and I relished them well; they strengthened and revived me, so that I was soon able to raise my head; and in a day or two I could sit up, and my eye-sight was restored.

God bless that young Indian brave and his good squaw! They nursed me as carefully and gently, during those days I spent in their rude but hospitable tent, as my own mother would have done—and *they saved my life!* I could not understand their language, nor they mine; but in this case, on both sides, "actions spake louder than words"—theirs of kindness, mine of gratitude. Men talk about the humanity of civilization, and the cruelties of barbarism; but I have the best of reasons for knowing and feeling that there is as much humanity in "the savage breast"—if

these Indians are indeed savages—as can be found in the breast of the most perfect civilization that mankind has ever known.

One day the young Indian came into the tent, looking excited and sad in turns, and by and by he approached my couch, and pointing with his finger and nudging his head out towards the prairie, said “Wo, haw! Wo, haw! Wo, haw!”—(having no doubt heard some emigrants speaking thus to their ox teams, and deeming that the best manner in which he could indicate that he wished me to go out with him.) Getting his meaning, I gave my assent, and he then lifted me up, assisted me to mount his saddled pony, and leading the animal, he took me to an encampment of the Pike’s Peak Overland Express Company, whose coach and team, it seems, had just reached that point from Leavenworth City, bound westward. The Express party received us very kindly and gave us to eat and drink, and agreed to take me to a point of safety next day. Returning with the Indian to his tent, and remaining over the night in the tender care of himself and his attentive squaw, the next morning, bidding them an affectionate and tearful farewell, I left them and was taken by the Express party to their first station, which they had just established there, and which was near the spot where my brother Charles had died, and where the Indian had found me in a dying condition. Mr. Williams, the Superintendent of the Company, who happened to be with the coach, gave the station woman, a kind, tender-hearted lady, directions to take good care of me till the next coach for the west came along, and then I was to take that for Denver City. Besides the lady who kept the station, there were there a hired man, a hired girl and two drivers. The Express party stopped long enough to bury the body of my brother, and then proceeded on their way. I was there some dozen days, during which time the good woman nursed me very kindly, when all of us were driven away, to the next station east, by hostile parties of Camanche and Apache Indians, who were in pursuit of the Arapahoes, with whom they were at war. Fortunately we escaped unharmed from the warriors, and after waiting two days longer, the stage-coach of the Overland Express Company from the east at length arrived, and I proceeded therewith to Denver City, where I arrived on the 11th day of May, nearly three months after the day we left our home in Illinois.

And here let me stop long enough to express my grateful and

heart-felt thanks to the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Company, and to Mr. R. D. Williams, the Superintendent, especially, for their humane treatment of me; for they not only nursed and fed me kindly, but landed me at Denver, free of charge. Such acts of kindness and humanity deserve to be recorded, as they are in my inmost heart, never to be erased.

One of the first objects that arrested my attention just before entering Denver, was my lost pony, which we had purchased at Lawrence, and which we supposed had been stolen by the Indians on the Kansas river. He was found by some emigrants, wandering about on the Smoky Hill Fork. They brought him along with them to Denver, and there sold him. At Denver, I one day met "Captain" Gibbs, whose company, it will be remembered, we overtook at, and traveled with from, the old Indian's hut east of Fort Riley, and whom we left in the Buffalo country, hunting. I also met Currans in Denver. Gibbs was working in the mines, and Currans was driving team for his board. They informed me that they had a hard time getting over the plains, enduring many hardships, and that they left all the rest, except the North Carolinian, to perish on the plains. Of all those seventeen men, who were on the plains while I was on the journey, only five are living, as far as I can ascertain. It is probable that all the rest perished. The five referred to are Captain Gibbs, Thomas Stevenson, John Currans, the North Carolinian (whose name I never learned) and myself. Stevenson is the only one besides myself of the original party of five who left Whiteside County, Illinois, who is alive—John Campbell having probably starved to death, as did my brothers. What a melancholy termination to a bold adventure!

My narrative is drawing to a close. It only remains for me to say that, after reaching Denver City, learning the true state of facts in regard to the gold bubble that had been blown by reckless speculators for the drawing on of just such young men as we were, and remaining there for some three weeks, vainly trying to find something to do to earn a living, I made an arrangement with a Mr. Cooper, of Iowa, who had come to Denver with a saw-mill and sold it, to return with him in a mule team across the plains and as far east as the Missouri river. Our return journey was in the summer, with good weather most of the time, and we reached Omaha City, Nebraska side of the Missouri river, in safety. We traveled by what is known as the Platte route. At Omaha, I took

a steamer to St. Joseph; there took the cars to Hannibal, on the Mississippi, and thence I came by railroad to my old home in Whiteside County—worn, weary and poor, with just fifty cents in my pocket, and feeling content to spend the rest of my days—and I am still quite a young man—in peace at home, and on the farm. Gold stories have no longer any allurements for me. Gold, that I fancied glittering invitingly in the distance, was the *ignis fatuus* that lured me astray—that led my lamented brothers to destruction, and came near making me a sharer of their terrible fate. And here let me conclude by advising all men who meditate a trip to Pike's Peak, that, as far as the gold mines are concerned, "distance lends enchantment to the view." There is gold there, no doubt, but you must have capital, machinery and much patience to get it. A poor man is better off here.

My story is told. When I commenced, I said it was a "sad tale," and is it not so? It is a tale of realities, and in its sequel, as far as my rescue and preservation are concerned, it proves that truth is indeed "stranger than fiction." I was delivered from the very "jaws of death," and though I deplore, and must ever lament, the terrible and untimely taking off of my beloved brothers, whose bones now lie bleaching on the plains of Western Kansas, yet I thank God religiously, heartily and fervently, that He has rescued me from the fate that stared me in the face, and not left this sad history unwritten, or the fate of my companions untold.

DANIEL BLUE.



## A LETTER HOME ANNOUNCING SAD TIDINGS.

On the day after my arrival at Denver City, I became acquainted with a gentleman, Mr. Alexander J. Pullman, who, at my request, wrote to my relatives in Illinois, apprizing them of the death of my brothers. The following is a copy of his letter :

DENVER CITY, CHERRY CREEK, May 12, 1859.

MR. JOHN WILSON :

*Dear Sir*—It is with pain that I inform you of the death of two of your brothers-in-law, Alexander and Charles Blue, who died from starvation on the Smoky Hill route to the Pike's Peak gold mines. Daniel Blue, the only brother who is left to tell the sad news, arrived at this place yesterday. Daniel owes his life to the Arapahoe Indians, who, in almost the hour of death, rescued him from his awful situation, took him to the camp, made him comfortable in preparing him food, such as he could eat, washing him, combing his hair, and taking him to the whites on their ponies. Daniel is very weak, but is rapidly improving. On his arriving, I invited him to my cabin, where I soon got him a cup of coffee, and the best the bakery could afford of pies and cakes. When he had refreshed himself and rested, I took my pocket diary and commenced noting down the sad and horrible story of Daniel Blue, which causes me to shudder as I write it down. He requested me to write to you, so that all his friends would hear of the sad and melancholy fate of the brothers and George Soley, of Cleveland, Ohio. Alas ! how will the parents and friends of these unfortunate young men feel when they hear the sad news. I can truly feel and sympathize with them on their receiving the distressing intelligence, ascertaining, as I do, that they were residents in the adjoining county from me in Illinois.

Daniel Blue informed me that he with his brothers, Alexander

and Charles, left their home in Whiteside County, Illinois, for the gold mines at Pike's Peak. They left a comfortable home—a father, mother, and three sisters. Alexander left a wife and three children to bewail their sad loss. The three brothers, with George Soley, of Cleveland, Ohio, arrived at Kansas City on the 6th of March. They then started on foot for Lawrence, Kansas, where they bought a pony. They then passed on to Topeka, where they supplied themselves with provisions. They traveled on to Fort Riley, and so on to the Smoky Hill Fork, when unfortunately, on their way, they had their pony stolen from them. They then packed their blankets and what provisions they had on their backs. They commenced suffering with hunger. Traveling on for the space of ten days, living now and then on a hare or bird shot by Daniel. On the 26th day of March, the heavens grew dark, and the dark clouds cast a fearful gloom over the face of the earth. They lost their way—had no road, no compass to guide their footsteps on their long, tedious journey. The wind commenced blowing and the snow falling, when George Soley gave up to die, he could not go on any further, and died the next day. Then, soon after, Alexander Blue died; he retained his senses up to the last moment of his existence, and died perfectly happy, though sincerely regretting not being able to see his wife, children, father, mother and sisters once more in this world of care and sorrow. He requested his two brothers, if ever they reached their homes alive, to take good care of his family. He told them to bid all the family members farewell in this life, with a fervent hope that they might all meet again in a better world.

Then how dreadful was the condition of the two brothers living. They were compelled, painfully, from a state of starvation, to subsist on the dead body of their brother. They left the bones of their two companions to bleach on the plains of Kansas. Charles and Daniel traveled on about five days, when Charles gave up to die. Daniel remained with him while he lived. In his dying moments, he tried to cheer up his only surviving brother by telling him he would get through his travels alive; he also told him, that when he was dead, to feed on his flesh and travel on as fast as he could. Charles died perfectly happy, feeling that all his sins were forgiven him. He then closed his eyes in death, leaving Daniel to moan and bewail his sad fate all alone. He lived then a few days on the remains of poor Charles, when, lo and behold!

in an unexpected hour, when death was staring him in the face, three Indians came that way and rescued him from his impending fate.

The brothers' bones lie bleaching on the plains of Kansas ; their souls are in the spirit world. I can fully sympathize with you, as a brother-in-law. Alas ! what must be the feelings of those parents, wife, children, and sisters, when this heart-rending intelligence reaches their ears. May God grant them fortitude and resignation to bear it, and to look to Him who can alone give them comfort in this trying hour. I now bid you farewell, mourning friends, and that you may find comfort where alone it is to be had, is the ardent and most fervent prayer of

Yours ever,

Most respectfully, and a sympathizer of the afflicted DANIEL BLUE,

ALEXANDER J. PULLMAN.

*(Formerly from Ogle County, Illinois.)*

## LINES

[Written on the occasion of the death, by starvation, of Alexander Blue, while on a journey, with his brothers, to Pike's Peak.]

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BY ELIZABETH BERTY.

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Lay up nearer, brother, nearer,  
 For my limbs are growing cold,  
 And thy presence seemeth dearer  
 When thine arms around me fold.

I am dying, surely dying;  
 Soon you'll miss me from your arms,  
 For my form will soon be lying  
 On the fearful Kansas Plains.

Harken to me, brother, harken—  
 I have something I would say,  
 Ere the veil my vision darkens,  
 And I go from hence away.

I am going, surely going;  
 But my hopes in God are strong;  
 I am willing, brother, knowing  
 That He doeth nothing wrong.

Tell my father, when you greet him,  
 That in death I prayed for him—  
 Prayed that I might meet him  
 In a world that's free from sin.

Tell my mother (God assist her,  
 Now that she is growing old)  
 That her son would fain have kissed her,  
 When his life grew pale and cold.

Harken, brother, catch each whisper—

'Tis my wife, I speak of now—

Tell, oh! tell her how I missed her,

When the fever burnt my brow.

Tell her, brother, (closely listen,

Don't forget a single word,)

That in death my eyes did glisten,

With the tears her memory stirred.

Tell her she must kiss my children,

Like the kiss I last impressed;

Hold them as when last I held them,

Folded closely to my breast.

Give them early to their Maker,

Putting all her trust in God,

And He never will forsake her,

For He has said so in His Word.

Oh! my children! Heaven bless them!

They were all my life to me;

Would I could once more caress them,

Ere I die upon the plains.

'Twas for them I left my home,

What my hopes were, I'll not mention:

But I've gained an orphan's portion,

Yet "He doeth all things well."

Tell my sisters (and remember

Every kindly spoken word)

That my heart hath been kept tender,

By the thoughts their memory stirred.

Tell them I ne'er reached the haven,

There to seek the precious dust;

Now I've gained a port called Heaven,

Where the gold will never rust.

Urge them to secure an entrance—

They will find their brother there;

Faith in Jesus, and repentance,

Will secure to each a share.

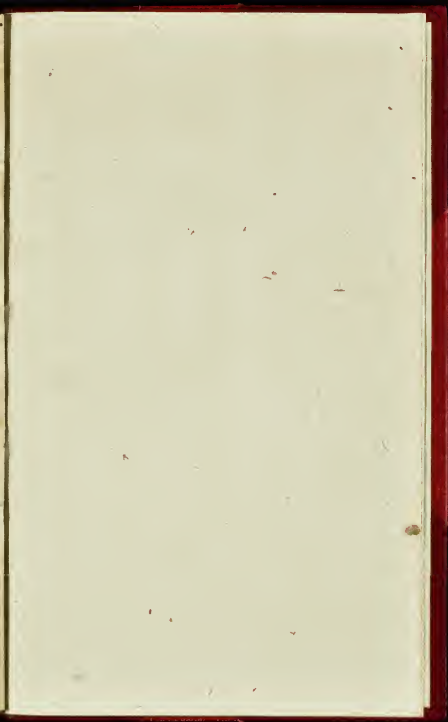
Hark! I hear my Saviour speaking!

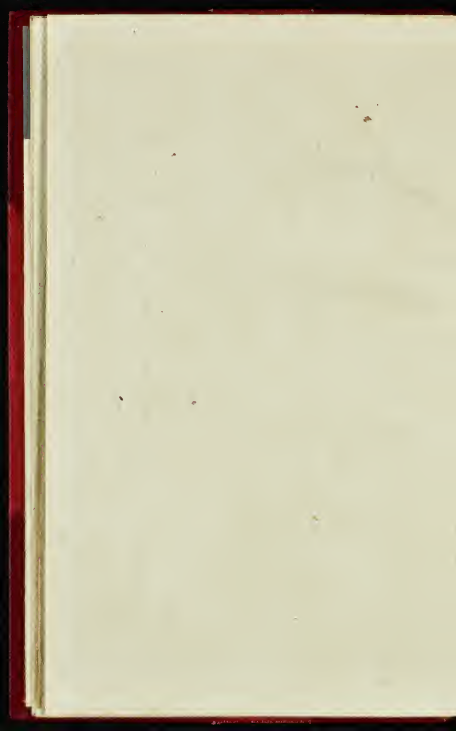
'Tis His voice I know so well.

When I'm gone, oh! don't be weeping,

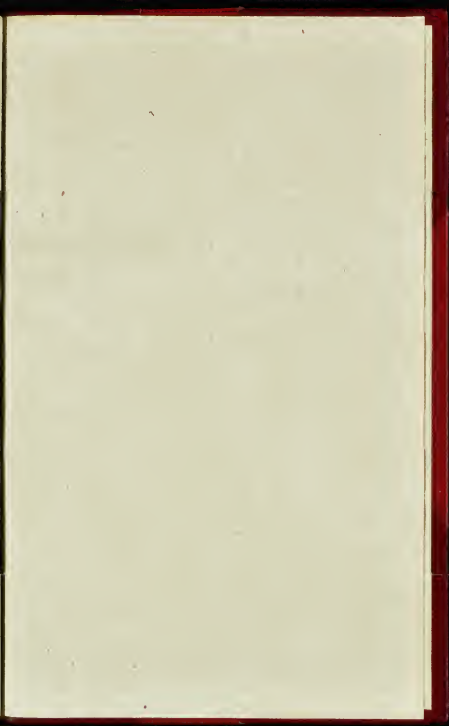
Brother, 'tis my last farewell!











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